

REMARKS

The present Amendment revises the claims in order to further distinguish the invention from the references cited in the Office Action of April 7, 2004, as will be discussed in more detail below. Furthermore, the present Amendment adds new dependent claims 5 and 6 to further protect the invention.

A brief summary of the present application's disclosure will now be presented with reference to Figure 1. The application is directed to a technique for booking and issuing tickets. A person who needs a ticket can book the ticket using a personal computer 30 and an external reservation system 10 that is selected by the person. The ticket is issued, though, by a local computer 20 (which includes a net server 21 and an issuing terminal 23) and the selected external reservation system. The local computer 20 issues the ticket upon receiving booking data that is sent from the PC 30 to the local computer 20 over a local area network 25.

Applicant's technique thus employs two separate stages. The first stage is a booking stage in which a personal computer directly communicates with an external reservation system in order to book a ticket. The personal computer generates booking data which is sent in a predetermined format to the local computer. The second stage is the ticket-issuing stage, when the local computer issues the booked ticket based on the booking data in the predetermined format that is received from the personal computer.

One problem with conventional intranet ticket booking and issuing systems is that the purchasing procedure is relatively complicated, so that a special operator is typically needed. The present invention avoids this problem by permitting a person to book a ticket

on the website of a selected external reservation system, using a fill-in form from the website. The different external reservation systems generally use different fill-in forms, though.

Applicant's technique relates to an intranet booking system. In Applicant's technique, after completion of the booking, the booking data is compiled in a predetermined format for use by the ticket-issuing local computer. The local computer thus does not need to interact with the selected external reservation system during a booking procedure. The system can nevertheless utilize fill-in forms provided by the websites of the external reservation systems, so a company that employs Applicant's system does not need to display its own special reservation screen to company employees who might need tickets from various different vendors. Nor is a special operator such as an in-house reservation expert needed.

The Office Action of April 7, 2004 rejected all of the claims for obviousness on the basis of Hunt '892, Garback, and Tagawa. For the reasons discussed below, however, it is respectfully submitted that both independent claims in this application are patentable over these references.

The preamble of claim 1 recites a local computer, a personal computer, and external reservation systems. The body of the claim now recites a booking step and an issuing step. The booking step of claim 1 has various sub-steps, which provide generally that the local computer sends URLs of external reservation systems to the personal computer and receives booking data of a predetermined format from the personal computer after a booking has been completed through a website of one of the external reservation

systems. In the issuing step of claim 1, the local computer receives the booking data with the predetermined format and uses it to issue the ticket.

In contrast to what is recited in claim 1, Hunt's system employs a host computer that interacts with an external reservation system during a booking procedure. Hunt uses application interfaces (API's) that are resident on a server and that assist the client computers by receiving a request command from a client computer and sending the request to the external reservation system (see the passage at Hunt's column 2, lines 12-32). Hunt's host computer does interface between the external reservation systems and the client computers and booking procedures, so the reference teaches away from the invention now defined by claim 1.

Turning next to the Garback reference, Garback's system 10, rather than his terminal 22, communicates with airline computer reservation system 28 to book tickets. Accordingly, the reference neither discloses nor suggests the "booking step" of claim 1.

The Tagawa reference discloses a self-service, stand-alone system which functions like a travel agent. The system performs all of the procedures for a reservation, including receiving a booking request, issuance of a booked ticket, and fare billing. It is respectfully submitted that an ordinarily skilled person who wanted to improve some aspect of Hunt's system, with its host computer and client computers, or Garback's system, would not have been motivated to even consider whether the Tagawa reference might hold hints that would be useful during this endeavor. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Tagawa is inappropriately combined with Hunt and Garback in the rejection.


Since claim 3 and new claim 5 depend from claim 1 and recite additional limitations to further define the invention they are patentable along with claim 1 and neither not be further discussed.

Independent claim 2 is an apparatus claim, and therefore does not recite separate booking and issuance steps like claim 1. However, claim 2 does recite a “receiving means for receiving, in said personal computer, a selection of one of the external reservation systems by the user...” and “transmitting and receiving means for connecting said personal computer to a website of the selected external reservation system and displaying a reservation screen thereof on said display means, and for transmitting and receiving information data including a booking number...via the Internet between said personal computer and the selected external reservation system.” Claim 2 also recites “generating means for generating, in said personal computer, booking data of a predetermined format... and sending a notification of completion of the booking and the booking data of the predetermined format to said local computer via said local area network.” The net result of these reservations is that the personal computer is used for booking, and then the booking data is sent to the local computer for ticket issuance. This is neither disclosed or suggested by the references.

Claims 4 and 6 depend from claim 2, so they are patentable along with claim 2 so need not be further discussed.

For the forgoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is therefore respectfully submitted.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allen Wood". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

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